1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

aboriginal peoples are called by the Spanish word "Racionales" which is the equivalent of "civilizado," civilized. It was only after they came to the conclusion that I was a Pumeh also, and quite different from the Racionales, that they accepted me and made this study possible.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Yaruros are small and dark with a strong mongoloid appearance. The faces are heavy, broad, with the eyes very often showing the mongoloid fold. The average stature of the men is about 5 feet 3 inches and of the women about 4 feet 10 inches. One gets the impression that the heads are larger than the ordinary in comparison with the body size. The frame is light, both men and women possessing small, beautifully shaped hands and feet. The body is relatively hairless, as is usual among pure Indian peoples. They have strong teeth and seem to keep them until a very old age.

The Yaruros have had some contact with Europeans or mixtures of Spanish, Negro, and Indians for several centuries. Herrara reached the Meta River in 1535, and subsequently missions were established along the Orinoco and its tributaries. About 1750 a mission was established at La Urbana for the Otomacos, and one was later established at Barinas. Apparently at that time these people inhabited the region between the Capanaparo and the Apure. No missions were established for the Yaruros, and, according to Gilii, the Yaruros came to the Otomaco missions to be baptized. Father Gumilla wrote:

> Here, between the Sinaruco and Meta rivers were established the colonies of Santa Barbara and of San Juan Francisco Regis at the end of 1739, having pacified the Saruro (Yaruro) nation; of which nation Father Manuel Roman, the Superior of those missions, in a letter of February 20, 1740, gives me excellent news of their good will and docility and, which is receiving our teachings anxiously; with the hope that with the good example of these first two other Reductions will be established. He adds that in the colony of San Francisco de Borja of the same nation Sarura, of which Father Francisco de Olmo is in charge, who has reduced their language to writing and a dictionary, Christianity is flourishing; and that already schools for writing, reading, and singing are attended by children (a short while ago they were wild); and that they sing the mass, litanies, etc., in a fair way. So much does careful and diligent effort accomplish in those wild regions! Father Rogue Lubian takes care of the Santa Teresa village with the same efficiency; Father Jose Maria Cervillini is in charge of San Ignacio; he, with Brother Agustin de la Vega, attend as best they can the rest of the new villages, and they are clamoring for workers with the firm hope that you will send them as soon as possible.

Since there has been contact with the white man and some Negroes for several centuries, one would expect a certain amount of race mixture. However, I never saw a sign of the slightest trace of Negro blood. The hair which, more than any other characteristic, seems to indicate Negro contact, in the case of the Yaruro is coarse and straight,

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

a pole. In general, therefore, organized play for child or adult is hardly present.

WAR

The Yaruros did not speak much of war. None of their legends make any reference to it except in one case which says that they were killed by the "Racionales" and that they retaliated.[6] The known historical sources say nothing except Father Gumilla's account, which makes reference to the pacification of the "Saruri."

MORAL ATTITUDES

On the subject of conduct, the outlook on life and the organization of life values, we must distinguish between theory and practice. The former grows out of reflection and represents the intellectualization of the universe as seen without much reference to practical life. The second springs from the social and economic relationships and the fusing of individual ends and purposes into the purposes and ends of the group, whereas the first is not strictly controlled by custom and practical needs. Both exist among the Yaruros. For the first we have to turn to the shaman, who in addition to being a religious leader, a savant, is also a moralist; and for the second we turn to the entire social group and need to watch it in its behavior.

In reading over the early account of the aborigines of the region, among which we must presumably include Yaruros, we gather that their moral concepts were different from those of the Christians, but perhaps neither better nor worse in practice. It must be doubted, however, whether a number of practices attributed to the Yaruros are authentic. We read, for instance, that a number of the aborigines were patricides, and we are given a picture of the male children, on reaching adolescence, rising against the fathers through lust for the mother. Patricide is an abhorrent crime and the motive behind it is equally abhorrent. It is to be doubted whether patricide, or even lesser acts, such as beating the father, were ever practiced, except in sporadic cases such as may occur in any society. It hardly seems possible that women were the cause of it when it is known, as it is known today, that mating and extramarital relationships are very strictly controlled by tradition and social training. Disregarding, therefore, such allusions to the moral life of the primitive peoples of the Orinoco, let us turn to our informants for an understanding of their present mode of life. The

[6] It would appear probable that the nomadic Yaruros were too weak to ever develop any warlike spirit.

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

772 177 terial existing in the literature at the present time is too scant to give us much of a lead. For the Llanos of Venezuela we have only the missionaries' accounts of the middle of the eighteenth century, meager accounts at best, and highly colored by the ideas of the missionaries themselves. But even these give us no idea as to how the Yaruros thought and behaved in those days. They give us notes only on the Otomacos and the Saliva. Perhaps material exists in unpublished form, but it must remain unknown for the purpose of the study.

● 175

773 In the mythology and in the shamanistic cult a number of figures stand out: Kuma, the mother goddess; Puaná, the great snake; Hatchawa, the culture hero; and Itciai, the jaguar. A more obscure figure is Kiberoh, who seems to be identified with a female evil spirit, but in one legend appears as the mate of Kuma. And an even more confused figure is India Rosa. It is known that the patron saint of the early Spaniards was Santa Rosa de Lima. If India Rosa is to be identified with Santa Rosa among the Yaruros, only the name has persisted. The confusion will become evident on reading the text.

773 177 The creation legend exists in various forms, but which of them represents the purely aboriginal one it is difficult if not impossible to determine. It seems best to give all versions. The myth of the flood appears also, and whether or not this is a foreign element in Yaruro mythology cannot be determined at this time. Of great interest to us are the ethical elements present in these stories. In the legend of the impregnation of Kuma, presumably by Puaná, the water snake, one may see a parallel to the story of Eve and the Serpent. Be that as it may, Puaná the Snake, Itciai the Jaguar, Kuma the Mother Goddess, and Hatchawa, the culture hero, are living spiritual forces among the Yaruros today, godheads who visit the Yaruro frequently during shamanistic performances and speak to the Yaruros through the mouth of the shaman. It would be too much to expect that all our facts should fit together into a logical pattern. The legendary world is never a well-ordered one and it speaks for the genuineness of Yaruro culture that we find such complex.

773 It will be noted that Kuma is definitely the Mother Goddess who gave birth to Hatchawa and to human beings. The latter were found by Hatchawa living under the ground. Hatchawa is always the culture hero. It is he who takes compassion on humanity and gives the fire, the bow and the arrow, and presumably a great many other things. Puaná, the Water Snake, is not only the shaper of the earth, but it is he who is given credit for great wisdom. Itciai, on the other hand, plays a very small role. In our legends he appears as a shaper or creator of the waters but plays no other part. But perhaps this [216] obscurity of Itciai is to be attributed to the fact that my informants belong to the Puaná moiety.

/9 cont./

172 of the Yaruro (7), or even remains of objects of the Yaruro of

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

former times, whose descendants have forgotten the techniques of making them?

c) History

175 We hardly know much more about their post-Colombian
177 history. Some Jesuit missionaries, as we mentioned above, had contacts with them on the bank of the Orinoco toward the middle of the eighteenth century (7).

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

173 Did they leave some sort of imprint on their culture? This
177 we do not know. In any case the Yaruro do not seem to have
648 preserved any memory of it, if it isn't the fear of bearded men on the part of the children. They do remember /10/ on the other hand for a more recent period some battles which put in opposition in the course of a civil war on the Capanaparo even the Venezuelans against each other.

177 The important event of the last years (1920-1940) remains for them the installation of Racionales (9) on the Capanaparo,

9. Venezuelans

an installation the repercussions of which, as much on their way of life and the social, economic, and religious structure of their society as on their sanitary conditions and their demographic situation (illnesses and, at a certain period, repression), have been and continue to be considerable.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

Second is the rate of deculturation. It is quite clear from comparing the material culture items observed by Petrullo with those that I observed, as well as from the present distribution of culture traits, which shows a gradient of trait loss as one goes from less acculturated to more acculturated groups, that the Yaruro once had a more elaborate culture content than at present. Though temporal extrapolations backwards can of course only be securely made by means of the written historical sources, items gleaned here and there from sources so far examined tend to confirm the inference from spatial distributions.[6] The implication of this is that the Yaruro were formerly considerably more complex, at least in their cultural content if not also in their cultural structure, than at the periods of ethnographic observation.

Third, a series of arguments concerning the ecological relations of the Yaruro to the land, and of the various tribes to each other and the food supply, could be presented which would suggest ecological specialization by tribal or subtribal groups among the Yaruro, Sáliva, Guahibo, Kuiva, Achagua, and Otomaco, all in a complex system (cf. Kirchhoff, 1948 *b*).

Fourth, an interesting ecological argument can be made which would resolve the disagreement about horticulture: that Petrullo's statement regarding horticulture might possibly be correct for the small, highly special area he studied and — the Orinoco sand bars and the estuary of the Capanaparo River in which wet-season flooding appears to be exceedingly extensive, hence sharply limiting horticultural possibilities — but that they do not apply to other zones of the llanos which do not have the ecological peculiarities of the river-mouth area.[7] I have discussed some aspects of this in previous publications, especially with regard to the importance of flooding, the area of gallery forest available for horticulture, and the pattern of transhumance (Leeds, 1961 *a*, especially pp. 13-18). An ecological-geographical survey of the entire region between the Orinoco highlands and the Andean spurs to the west is needed.

III

We may now turn to the question of written historical evidences. No published work on the Yaruro or the llanos has made use of much more than a dozen

[6] Cf. Crévaux, 1883: 570; Carrizo, 1910: 39; Acosta Saignes, 1961: 97, etc., as well as the loss of culture traits observable between Petrullo's and my visits.

[7] That this area is rather unique is clearly indicated by many maps which represent it as entirely flooded or as a welter of water-ways (cf. Gumilla, 1791). Acosta Saignes, in a foreword to Carvajal, points out that it was quite simple to mistake one river for another since, at least during the rainy season, they all flowed into each other near the mouth. The flooding makes any ordinary gardening impossible for a large part of the year. The hypothesis tends, however, to be contradicted by Le Besnerais's findings (1954; also, Leeds, 1961 *a*). It may be noted that in the almost absolutely flat Guachara area, between the Cunaviche and Arauca rivers, at the Indian village of Palmarito- much of the llanos floods. The loamy-mud soils are excellent for crops, but crops are only grown in those areas which remain a few inches or a foot or two above highest rainy-season water-level.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

works at best. As of the present I have been able to discover at least 300 works, or more, with some relevance to the llanos area. Not all of these refer to tribal groups, and of those that do, not all refer to specific tribes, much less the Yaruro. However all give some picture of life and conditions on the llanos, much of which is helpful, and some of which is most enlightening.

The published sources may roughly be classified as follows:

A) Travel records such as those of Carvajal (1648, [1956]), Chaffanjon (1889), Crévaux (1883), Humboldt (1799 *ff.* [1941]), Marcano (1893), Vázquez de Espinosa (1628 [1942]), Vela (1889 [1935-1936]).

B) Collections of documents such as those edited by Friede (1957-1960) and Cuervo (1891-1894),

C) Histories of various sorts, especially mission histories,[8]

D) Books and articles on such topics as the climate or the insect and plant life of the llanos which make passing mention of human occupation, e.g. Ramia (1959), Fiasson (1947),

E) Administrative-political documents such as Indian laws, boundary commision reports, etc,[9]

F) Earlier ethnographic and linguistic articles and books, including missionaries' reports such as Gumilla's and Gilij's, but also works from this century by Antolínez (1946), Jahn (1927), Oramas (1940), Acosta Saignes (1961), and so on, some apparently based on direct contact with the groups concerned, others based on documentary and other research.

The unpublished sources are mainly to be found in the Archive of Indies in Seville which was the main depository of documents from the Indies during the entire Colonial period. Millions of documents are deposited there, a great portion of them unexploited. The documents are arranged by the areas from which they came. Documents of all kinds were sent back to Spain: letters from officials reporting on travels and many other affairs, soldier's reports, documents of legal cases, missions reports, and so on.

The archives also include documents *from* Spain regarding the area, such as royal orders to the administrative personnel in the region. Curiously, though we have found many references elsewhere to grammars and vocabularies of Indian languages and similar documents (cf. Viñaza, 1892; Chamberlain, 1910), we have found none of these in the Seville Archive. We have recovered several hundred documents comprising about 4-5 000 microfilm frames.

A second great archival source is the Colombian National Archive in Bogotá. Bogotá was, during most of the Colonial period, the regional center for

[8] Cf., among mission histories, Aguirre, 1941; Cassani, 1741; Lodares, 1736; Navarro, 1940; Rio Negro, 1929; Rivero, 1736. General histories are legion. Cf. Acosta, 1848; Aguado, 1580; Aguado, 1918; Ballisteros, 1936; Baralt and Díaz, 1887; Caulin, 1779; Herrera, 1534; Ojer, 1960; Oviedo, 1852; Simon, 1882, Zamora, 1930, etc.

[9] Cf. Aguirre and Montalbán, 1846; Calcaño, 1891; Great Britain, 1898; Ramos Perez, 1961; Recopilación, 1681; Maps to Accompany . . ., 1896.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

an area which included what is now Venezuela. There was a constant flow of documents to Bogotá many of which stayed there, instead of being sent to the higher level administrative center in Seville. The collections are particularly rich in legal cases concerning Indians or land rights of Spaniards where Indians were involved. I have recovered some 5 000 microfilm frames here without beginning to exhaust the resources. Further document search is needed there.

A third important source is the Vatican Library which contains materials concerning missions and their activities. This source has not as yet been explored.

It is reported that the Archivo del Cauca in Popoyán, Colombia, is also of great importance since it was the administrative center for the llanos area. This also remains to be explored.

Aside from these, there is a series of minor sources of documents. The Brinton collection in Philadelphia has a number of documents, particularly on linguistics, relevant to the llanos area. Yale University has some documents. The Library of Congress appears to be relatively poor in llanos materials. I was able to discover only a copy of the Lord's prayer in Yaruro, but little else.

In Spain, the Biblioteca del Palacio has a number of documents of interest but is not a source comparable to that of the major archives. Preliminary searches have been made here, and considerable material has been received. The Biblioteca Nacional may also have documents. Formely the Berlin Royal Library had some important documents, especially a grammar and vocabulary by Forneri (n.d.). Several colleagues in Germany have kindly attempted to trace this document, but the Royal Library has been so dispersed by two wars that no one knows where the material is. It is hoped to be able to track these down too.

Venezuelan archives appear to be rather thin, also, since most of the material was sent to Popayán, Bogotá, or Seville. Some material, however, appears to be available there and has been explored by Father Canedo of the Academy of American Franciscan History in Washington. With Father Canedo abroad, it has, as yet, been impossible to investigate the material. I understand he has collected, mostly in Caracas, 50 000 frames on Venezuelan history, focussing primarily on the Spanish aspects, rather than on Indian. There may also be small deposits of documents in the diocesan centers of the llanos area.

IV

A short description of the data handling will be of interest. Each tribal group will have its own file of 5" × 8" cards which will be arranged chronologically according to the date of contact with the Indians, and then grouped in equivalent periods for easy comparison. On each card, special attention to the following categories of information will be given: season of observation, conditions of observation, observer, location at the time, subsistence reported,

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

social features reported, ideological features reported, and relations with other tribes mentioned. The card sets will be arranged by geographical location of the tribe so that for any given time period one may pull out all the sets and arrange the tribes in their spatial order. Thus for any time period a picture of the trait distributions, cultural-ecological conditions, inter-tribal socio-ecological relations, and acculturational-social contacts and events should be obtainable.

V

Though, to date, I have been concerned mainly with collecting bibliography and documentary materials rather than with their analysis, I should like to hazard several very tentative conclusions, or perhaps guesses, with respect to the ethnohistory of the llanos, and particularly of the Yaruro, based on the geographic, ethnographic, archeological, linguistic, and historical data known to me now. Some, however, are presented more as hypotheses for proof or disproof through continued research.

First, Petrullo's description is erroneous at least as respects the subsistence economy. Late Nineteenth Century travellers like Crévaux and Vela and several persons in this century mention horticulture. Still earlier reports go back to the earlier Eighteenth Century when missionaries speak of horticulture. Their reports apply to the Yaruro, Otomaco, Guahibo, and other groups. It has not yet been possible to decide whether they introduced or found horticulture among these peoples. Petrullo's error appears to have several explanations:

A) That he was incapacitated for several weeks by sore feet and was unable to travel about the land away from the rivers. In my experience, a careful criss-crossing of the land on foot is an absolute necessity if one is to know how these peoples carry on their subsistence activities. I have paced off with a pedometer the entire area used by the group I worked with. In the course of so doing I discovered all kinds of gardens, houses, and other evidences of their land use. These would not otherwise have been discovered by an observer nor mentioned by the Yaruro, since mainly what is physically present is, to them, worthy of mention.[10] I should say a great portion of my most important data came from such accidental discoveries made while walking about.

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[10] I would stand at a certain spot in a garden and ask "Whose garden is this?" "Juan's." Then I might walk perhaps ten feet and say, "Juan keeps his garden well." "But this is not Juan's garden." "You just said that this was Juan's garden." "That was over there on the other side of that row of corn." This happened a number of times. I also asked once, "Is there female shamanism here?" "No." Several days later, a group from an neighboring village came to visit. After an all-night session of the *tou'be*, several women performed shamanistic rites. I said, "I thought you said there is no female shamanism here?" "There isn't anyone here [i. e. in our locality] who practices — these women are from upstream." The same cleaving to locus was observed with respect to time. I was told that Miguel was a shaman ("musico"). I said "Miguel, are you not a musico?" "I am not a musico. I cannot sing." A few weeks later, he was singing. I said,